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Message Text

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ACTION ABF-01

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 SS-15 A-02 /029 W
----------125813 281016Z /10
P 280942Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1595

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 17455

STADIS//

FOR BEN READ FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: AGAO
SUBJECT: EXPANDED ROLE OF GAO AND GAO VISITS TO SELECTED
- POSTS

REF: STATE 207030

1. I WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE ACTIVITY OF GAO IN ITS EXPANDED ROLE OVERSEAS. THE IMPORTANCE OF THEIR INVESTIGATIVE AND EVALUATION RESPONSIBILITIES IN RESPONDING TO CONGRESS IS RECOGNIZED, AND I FULLY SUPPORT THEIR EFFORTS IN THIS REGARD. AT THE SAME TIME, THE VERY ISSUES IMPLIED BY THE QUESTIONS YOU HAVE POSED IN YOUR MESSAGE HAVE BEEN OF GROWING CONCERN HERE, AND I AM DELIGHTED TO SEE THAT THE NEED FOR BETTER PROCEDURES TO HANDLE THIS IMPORTANT ACTIVITY IS RECEIVING THE ATTENTION OF BOTH THE DEPARTMENT AND THE GAO.

2. GAO VISITS TO JAPAN HAVE BEEN STEADILY INCREASING. FROM AUGUST 1976 THROUGH JULY 1977 THERE WERE FOUR; THEY QUADRUPLED THE FOLLOWING YEAR. THEY ARE CONTINUING AT ABOUT THE SAME PACE WITH TWO ALREADY UNDERWAY OR COMPLETED SINCE AUGUST 1 AND TWO MORE SCHEDULED IN OCTOBER.
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THE VISITS HAVE RANGED FROM A FEW DAYS UP TO FIVE WEEKS. ALTHOUGH THE DURATION IS GENERALLY REASONABLE, WE THINK THAT EQUALLY GOOD, IF NOT BETTER, RESULTS COULD BE ATTAINED THROUGH BETTER PREPARATION BY THE TEAM PRIOR TO ARRIVAL AT POST. THIS COULD REDUCE THE TIME REQUIRED TO BE SPENT AT THE POST AND POSSIBLY THE SIZE OF THE TEAM ITSELF. THE SUBMISSION OF ADVANCE QUESTIONNAIRES OR

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STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE OF THE VISIT AND POINTS TO BE RAISED WITH HOST GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS OR OTHERS PRIOR TO ARRIVAL OF THE TEAM AT POST IS HIGHLY USEFUL.

3. THE IMPACT ON THE EMBASSY'S OPERATION IS AT THE OFFICER LEVEL WHERE INORDINATE AMOUNTS OF TIME HAVE BEEN DEVOTED TO BRIEFING REPRESENTATIVES, WHO HAVE NOT FAMILIARIZED THEMSELVES ADEQUATELY BEFORE ARRIVAL, AND IN RESEARCHING AND ASSEMBLING MATERIAL AT POST WHICH IS READILY AVAILABLE IN WASHINGTON. TIME SPENT BY OFFICER STAFF IN CONNECTION WITH THE NON-USG CONTACTS OF THE TEAM, ON THE OTHER HAND, CAN BE PRODUCTIVE FROM THE EMBASSY'S STANDPOINT AS WELL. INTERPRETER SERVICES ARE PROVIDED WHEN NEEDED ALTHOUGH LANGUAGE OFFICERS ARE USUALLY ASSIGNED TO HANDLE VISIT, SOMETIMES ELIMINATING NEED FOR REGULAR INTERPRETER. DEMANDS ON THE POST'S ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCES ARE MINIMAL. HOTEL ARRANGEMENTS AND OFFICE SPACE ARE PROVIDED. SECRETARIAL SUPPORT AND TRANSPORTATION ARE NOT NORMALLY FURNISHED AND, THEREFORE, OVERTIME HAS NOT BEEN AN ISSUE.

4. REACTION OF THE GOJ COULD BECOME NEGATIVE; HOWEVER, THE VISIT OF COMPTROLLER GENERAL STAATS DURING PAST YEAR WITH HIS JAPANESE COUNTERPARTS HAS BEEN USEFUL IN DISPELLING SOME OF THE CONCERNS WITHIN GOJ CIRCLES AS TO GAO ACTIVITIES AND MOTIVES. GAO TEAMS HAVE BEEN CONFIDENTIAL

RECEPTIVE TO POST'S SUGGESTIONS OR COMMENTS WITH RESPECT TO JAPANESE SENSITIVITIES IN GENERAL AND ON SPECIFIC ISSUES; THEY HAVE BEEN TACTFUL IN ELICITING INFORMATION AND DATA AND IN MANY INSTANCES THE CONTACTS HAVE BEEN MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL.

5. ONE TROUBLESOME ASPECT OF THE GAO'S WORK HAS BEEN THE POST'S INABILITY TO CONTROL THE MANNER IN WHICH IT IMPINGES ON ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS, THE PRINCIPAL CASE IN POINT BEING THE USE OF THE STUDY ON DEFENSE-LABOR COSTS. GAO WAS MOST COOPERATIVE IN TAKING COGNIZANCE OF THE SENSITIVITY OF ITS STUDY IN RELATION TO THE ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS AND ADJUSTED ITS SCHEDULE ACCORDINGLY. VERY LITTLE INFORMATION IN THE RESULTING REPORT DERIVED FROM NEW LINES OF INQUIRY; IT WAS DRAWN ALMOST IN ITS ENTIRETY FROM THE EARLIER LABOR-COST STUDY AND U. S. NEGOTIATING POSITIONS. WHILE THE REPORT TO CONGRESS PLAYED BACK AS RECOMMENDATIONS THE SAME POINTS THAT THE EMBASSY AND USFJ HAD BEEN MAKING OVER THE PAST YEAR IN THE COURSE OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE JAPANESE, RAISING SOME QUESTION AS TO THE REAL NEED FOR A TEAM SPENDING SEVERAL WEEKS IN JAPAN, IT PROBABLY WAS USEFUL IN UNDER-

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SCORING CONTINUED USG CONCERNS ABOUT RISING LABOR COSTS.
ON THE OTHER HAND, THE INTRODUCTION BY THE HOUSE APPRO-
PRIATIONS COMMITTEE OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE DEFENSE
APPROPRIATIONS BILL, DRAWING ON THE GAO STUDY, WHICH
CALLED FOR THE CURTAILMENT OF PAYMENTS TO LOCAL

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 TOKYO 17455

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EMPLOYEES IN EXCESS OF PREVAILING PRACTICE WAS, AS THE
EMBASSY HAS POINTED OUT, SINGULARLY ILL-TIMED IN TERMS
OF OUR EFFORT TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL COST RELIEF FROM THE
GOJ THIS YEAR. WHILE THIS DOES NOT REFLECT UPON THE
CONDUCT OF THE GAO TEAM'S INVESTIGATION IN JAPAN, IT
DOES REFLECT ON THE WAY IN WHICH THE GAO'S WORK AFFECTS
THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF MISSION OBJECTIVES.

6. THE POSSIBILITY OF GAO BECOMING A CHANNEL OF COMMUNI-
CATION WITH THE HOST GOVERNMENT, THEREBY SHORT-CUTTING
NORMAL CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION FOR DEALING WITH FOREIGN
POLICY MATTERS, WITH THE RISK AS WELL THAT FOREIGN
ELEMENTS MAY ATTEMPT TO USE THE GAO FOR PARTISAN POLITI-
CAL PURPOSES, IS ALSO WORRISOME.

7. IN SUMMARY, I BELIEVE THAT THE FOLLOWING MEASURES
WOULD HELP IN INSURING THAT WE PROVIDE GAO THE SUPPORT
NEEDED TO CARRY OUT ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO THE CONGRESS
AND IN KEEPING ANY ADVERSE REACTION FROM THESE VISITS
AT MINIMAL LEVELS: (A) BETTER PREPARATION OF TEAMS
FOR THE REVIEW OR STUDY TO BE CONDUCTED ABROAD THROUGH
MAXIMUM UTILIZATION OF MATERIALS ALREADY AVAILABLE IN
WASHINGTON PRIOR TO INITIATION OF THE REVIEW ABROAD.
(2) IMPROVED ADVANCE COMMUNICATION WITH THE POST RE-
FLECTING SCOPE OF THE VISIT AND GIVING POST OPPORTUNITY

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TO COMMENT ON FEASIBILITY OR APPROPRIATENESS OF INQUIRY BEING PLANNED; AND (3) COGNIZANCE BY GAO OF THE NEED FOR CAREFUL TIMING AND HANDLING OF SENSITIVE POLICY ISSUES WHICH MAY BE IN ONGOING DELICATE DISCUSSION OR NEGOTIATION STAGES.

8. I HOPE THIS INFORMATION WILL BE HELPFUL; IF WE CAN PROVIDE FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE ADVISE. MANSFIELD

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